

AWFUL MINE DISASTER IN NEW RIVER DISTRICT.

Explosion in Red Ash Mine, Near Thurmond, West Virginia,

RESULTS IN TERRIBLE LOSS OF LIFE.

Over Fifty Bodies Have Been Taken From the Death Hole, With the Work of Rescue Still Going On—Latest Estimate Places the Total Number of Victims at One Hundred and Twenty-five—The Worst Calamity That Has Yet Befallen the Mining Industry in This State. Heartrending Scenes at the Mouth of the Mine When the Dead and Dying Were Brought Forth.

FIRE CREEK, W. Va., March 6.—The most disastrous mine explosion ever known in the New River district occurred at the Red Ash mine shortly after the miners went to work, early this morning. Although the most heroic work of the rescuing party has been going on incessantly all day, it is impossible to-night to estimate the full extent of the loss of life and property.

More than fifty dead bodies have already been taken out and the number of the dead may reach seventy-five or more. It is thought to-night that at least forty-five miners are yet entombed in the wrecked mine.

The Red Ash mine is a large drift and the explosion occurred near the entrance, which was thus closed by the falling slate, entombing a large number of miners.

Scene of the Disaster.

The scene of the disaster is between this place and Thurmond, on the South Branch of the Chesapeake & Ohio railway, and every assistance possible was rendered by the railway company, and by the adjoining mining towns. Relief parties from great distances arrived as soon as possible. District Mine Inspector Pinckney, with a corps of experts and many workmen, have been on the ground during the day, rendering all assistance possible, and devoting his attention more toward relief than to an official investigation as to the cause of the disaster.

No Efforts Spared.

J. Fred Effinger, of Staunton, Va., the principal owner of the mines, spared no effort in the work of rescue and relief, and his manager, Ferdinand Howell, had all the men available at work in trying to clear away the debris and rescue the entombed men. The managers and bosses of all the mines in this district came to the scene as soon as possible and joined in the work of rescue. It is impossible to describe the amount of work done by this concentrated army of men, but they were greatly impeded because of the extent of the enormous blockade at the entrance to the drift. The large heavy timbers of the entrance were blown out to some distance, together with a lot of heavy timbers. Even mules were blown out some distance. The force of an explosion caused an immediate falling of the slate and other debris, so that the entrance was filled up for a great distance, and the difficulties in fighting through it caused delay in the work of rescue. As many men as could work at one time were digging away with all their might and were relieved in short relays by other men, so as to expedite the work of rescuing as many as possible.

The first successful strike of the workers was about 10 a. m., when ten bodies were recovered. Seven of them were already dead, and the other three were dying.

As the miners were located at different places in the drift and the explosion caused the falling slate to blockade the rooms in different parts of the mine, the work of rescue met with one great obstruction after another.

Heartrending Scenes.

At the mouth of the mine the scene was beyond description, the wives and children and the neighbors of those who were known to be entombed were there in full force, and their anxiety and distress were most intense. While they were all seeking to help those who were rescued and to get the mine reopened, yet these bereaved people were for the most part in the way of the rescuers and had to be held back from the entrance.

The mine is one of the largest in West Virginia, and was very heavily timbered in the different drifts. It was for this reason feared that those who had not been killed by falling debris at the time of the explosion would be pinioned by these connected timbers and suffer death from suffocation.

Air was forced into the mine by engines on the surface, which were kept working after the explosion, but it was found that air could be pumped into the drift for only a short distance, as the coal, stone and earth shut off all possibility of reaching the interior. The pumps and all other machinery in the mine were demolished, so that everything had to be done through temporary arrangements on the surface.

Sent for Caskets.

After the men got under headway in the work of rescue they reached the first party in less than an hour, but they met greater difficulties after that time. It was then that telegrams were sent to Montgomery, Charleston and

other places for physicians, nurses and caskets, but during the greater part of the day there was use only for the caskets.

All work was stopped in the surrounding mines of the district, and the people within a radius of many miles assembled on the grounds of the Red Ash Company.

Had the explosion occurred an hour later many more would have been entombed in the mines.

The estimates on the number in the mines when the explosion occurred are based on the number who entered at 7 o'clock. The manager stated that by 8 o'clock or 8:30 a. m., there would have been twice as many men in the mines.

Carries Sorrow to All Homes.

The population of this mining village is only 500. All are miners, and the calamity will reach almost every little house in the mining town. None of the people here have been at their homes during the day, but they have remained around the Red Ash mine. Some have not eaten during the day. Food was liberally supplied to the relays of workmen in the rescuing party, but many of the women who could get no word of comfort refused to eat or go to their homes.

HORROR INCREASES.

Reliable Estimate at a Late Hour Puts the Number of Victims at 125—Thirty-seven Bodies Identified, and a Great Many Unrecognized.

FIRE CREEK, W. Va., March 6.—At a late hour to-night, the most reliable estimate obtainable put the number of the victims at 125. The capacity of the mine is 175, but there have been only 130 on the pay roll so far this month, and it is stated that nearly all of these were in the mine at the time of the explosion. The manager, superintendent, bosses, bookkeepers and others are very busy with the force of rescuers, but at the same time they are all very reluctant as to the extent of the casualties and any other information regarding the disaster. So far as could be learned, there are thirty-seven dead bodies in the village to-night, that have been taken out of the mine during the day and there are also parts of human bodies at different places. These bodies, as a rule, are so mangled as to be beyond recognition and the following are the only names of the dead that are obtainable late to-night:

B. B. LONG, fire boss.
BRET LONG, workman.
TOM LONG, trapper.
DODO LONG.
Two boys named Long.
JAMES SANDERS.
CHARLES FOUGH, machine runner.
NOVELLE DEWES.
SAM SHOU.
CHARLES DOWNEY.
CARL DOWNEY.
ANDREW J. PRETT.
JOHN CLAIRE.
Two Hambick brothers.
N. C. RAMSEY.
CRICK STUART.
JOHN DAY.
BERRY TUCKER.
WILLIAM DAY, (dying.)
THOMAS DAY.
MAT QUARRELES.
GRANVILLE HOMES.
JAMES HACKNEY.
SAM JACKSON.
MATT CALL.
BILL SLEDGE.
VALLIE EDGES.
JOE ELLIOTT.
BERRY WRIGHT.
DAWSON.
JOHN KANE.
ED HARPER.
BAT JONES.
RAWSON HOLMES.
ERNEST LOY.
JAMES WASHINGTON.
CHARLES PERFATER.

Distressing Scenes.

The scenes around the homes where the dead bodies are lying have drawn some of the immense crowd away from the workmen at the entrance to the mine. Those working on the rescue relays say that the scene becomes more terrible as they get farther into the mine. The men become almost faint of heart when they strike a place filled with dead bodies.

Most of the bodies that cannot be identified or recognized have been placed in the large blacksmith shop of the Red Ash Coal Company, and that place has been the appearance of a horrible morgue. Although the bodies are mangled beyond recognition, yet

they are surrounded by those who are in distress and hunting their lost friends.

Contact With Dust.

The general belief is that the explosion occurred by contact with dust when the miners entered this morning with their lights, and that it was not due to fire damp, as has been currently reported all day. Nearly all the men employed in the mine were white, only about one-fifth being colored, and most of the men were married and had families in the little cottages near the tipple of the great mine.

A special train arrived to-night from Montgomery, filled with reporters, physicians, nurses and others, and one car contained thirty caskets. After the arrival of the train an order was sent back to Montgomery for fifty more caskets. Another train arrived from Charleston, with physicians, caskets and relief supplies. Still another train came in from Hinton, but there is no need of physicians and nurses, as the victims are dead. There is great need of undertakers and expert mine workers. The work of rescue is being continued during the night and will be kept up until the mine is clear.

THE RED ASH MINE.

How It Is Operated—Was Inspected Last October and Pronounced Safe in Every Detail—Theories as to Cause of Disaster.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE INTELLIGENCER.

CHARLESTON, W. Va., March 6.—The Red Ash mine, where the terrible explosion and loss of life occurred to-day, is operated by the Red Ash Coal Company, composed of J. Fred Effinger, of Staunton, Va., and other Staunton parties. Ferdinand Howard is general manager. It is located on the south side of New River, fifty-nine miles east of Charleston. It is one of a series of mines controlled by the same parties. It is a drift mine, the product of which is hauled from the inside by mules for a distance of 2,500 feet to the drum house, where it is lowered down the plane by an eight foot drum and steel ropes. The last inspection was made by District Inspector Edward Pinckney, October 24, 1899, when the inspector reported to Chief Mine Inspector Paul: "Ventilation, haulways and mechanical arrangements found safe in every detail and satisfactory."

Chief Mine Inspector J. W. Paul, Governor Atkinson and Private Secretary Boggs and Deputy Inspector Jerry Meade left Charleston this afternoon, for the scene of the disaster. Before leaving Mr. Paul made the following statement:

"The explosion may have been caused by one of two sources: First, it may have been due to an accumulation of gas from natural causes. Second, it may have been from the generation of an explosive gas known as carbon monoxide, or white damp. The white damp is generated where powder is overworked and where there is incomplete combustion. For the reason of this mine having been in such excellent condition and being free from fire damp, I can hardly believe that the explosion was due to the presence of fire damp unless there was a sudden outburst of the gas in some section of the mine. The ventilation of this mine has been reported as being excellent, and the fact of there being a circulation of twenty-four thousand cubic feet of air per minute passing through the mine is evidence of good ventilation. Every effort will be made by myself and assistants to ascertain the real cause of the disaster, and the blame placed upon the person or persons responsible for the disaster."

Ordinarily there are about sixty persons employed in the mine.

EXAGGERATED REPORTS

Of the Loss of Life—Only 50 Miners Were Entombed—Ten Bodies Recovered So Far.

FIRE CREEK, W. Va., March 6.—The first reports of the explosion to-day, at Red Ash mine were greatly exaggerated. The latest reports since midnight are that there were only fifty miners entombed, instead of 125. Only ten bodies have been taken out so far instead of thirty-seven, as previously reported, but it is believed that all of the forty that are still in the mine will never be found alive. The explosion happened as the men were going into the mine in groups, and in couples in some instances, and they were strung along in this manner for over a mile, so that the work of rescue will require a long time. There were more men near the entrance who escaped than were lost.

STORMBERG OCCUPIED.

Metal Practically Clear of the Boers.

LONDON, March 6.—The war office has received the following dispatch from Lord Roberts:

OSFONTEIN, March 6. General Gatacre occupied Stormberg yesterday. The lines of railway north and west will now be repaired. General Clements is at Joubert's siding station, beyond Colesburg. The Duke of Marlborough, with the Oxford company of the Imperial Yeomanry, has left Cape Town for Naauwpoort.

"General Buller reports Natal now practically clear of the enemy and that he cannot hear of any formed body of them anywhere. The Boers left some ambulances full of their sick from which the mules had been taken for transport service."

LADY WHITE

Invested With Order of Crown of India. LONDON, March 6.—Lady White, wife of General White, has been invested by the queen with the order of the crown of India.

FRESH TROOPS POURING IN FOR ROBERTS,

Meantime the Boers are Concentrating in His Front, Preparing for

GREAT STRUGGLE TO COME.

Each Army on Both Sides of the Modder and Fortifying Copies.

LONDON, March 7, 4:10 a. m.—Gen. Roberts still pauses in the neighborhood of Osfontein, while stores, remounts and fresh troops stream toward him from the Cape. The British position also continues to improve in the minor spheres of the campaign. Natal is clear of Boers and Cape Colony is nearly so.

The Boers seemingly are pursuing the course commended by the strategists and are concentrating to resist the British main army. Various messages from correspondents with Lord Roberts report that the enemy are increasing continually on his front, extending, as one correspondent wires, eight miles, and as another says, eighteen miles. The lowest estimate of their numbers gives the Boers from 5,000 to 10,000 men, with smaller bodies moving north and south of the British lines.

Each army is on both sides of the Modder river. Although the Boers have mounted eight guns on the tops of kopjes and appear to be too far away for inspection, the British scouts report that they are diligently using pick and shovel. Military opinion is that their present position merely screens more easily defended ones deeper in the region.

None of the military experts endeavors to fathom Lord Roberts' plans, but it is suggested that he is quite willing to give the Boers time to assemble all their men in order to deliver a smashing blow more effectively.

The Round Robin.

The round robin in favor of the annexation of the Transvaal and the Free State, which is being promoted among the supporters of the government in the house of commons, continues to receive signatures. The signatories of the memorial to Mr. Balfour affirm that the time has arrived for plain speaking inside and outside of parliament, and that Lord Salisbury's words are being construed into a pledge against action and Lord Roberts' proclamation into a promise of no confiscation of Boer property.

The Transvaal agency at Brussels threatens a rising of the Cape Dutch in the event of action, though why the Dutch should rise then rather than now is not explained.

Mr. A. G. Hales, the Daily News correspondent, who was captured by the Boers on February 9, was released at Bloemfontein and put through the lines near Sterkstroom. He telegraphs that the Boers are demoralized, but adds that they have been treating the British wounded splendidly.

SCENES IN DANTE'S INFERNO

Rivalled on the Road to Colenso—British Gaining Important Positions. Rumored that Stein Will Flee to Pretoria, and Peace Negotiations Will be Result of Another British Success.

LONDON, March 6, 2:05 p. m.—The Boers in northern Cape Colony, are in full retreat to the Orange Free State. The possession of Stormberg puts General Gatacre in railroad communication with General Clements at Colesburg, for though the Boers partially wrecked the railroad it is understood that it can be quickly repaired, and thus the entrance of additional British troops into the Free State will be greatly facilitated.

From Osfontein, where Field Marshal Lord Roberts is opposed by a good sized body of Boers, there is still no news except reports of some skirmishes. The position gained by General Brabant at Dordrecht is reported to be exceedingly strong. According to the Times correspondent, the Boer numbers alone enabled them to retreat from Dordrecht, practically unhindered.

He also reports a violation of the white flag by the Boers and that they deliberately fired at close range, on a stretcher party.

General White's garrison has begun to leave Ladysmith and is arriving at the Mool river camp, where the troops will remain several days, after which they will go further south. They are emaciated and exhausted, and say the road to Colenso presents scenes that exceed in horror those depicted in Dante's "Inferno." Dead men and animals are lying, mutilated and putrid, in the trenches formerly occupied by the Boers and fill the air with a sickening stench. In cases where hurried burial had been attempted the rains have washed the earth away and out of the earth stick ghastly limbs and arms of dead burghers.

A dispatch from Osfontein says that according to the Boer prisoners, another important British success will cause President Steyn to flee to Pretoria, leaving a provisional government at Bloemfontein, which is likely to make peace overtures, though Free States not wishing for peace trekking into the Transvaal and there helping to make a stand which most of the British military critics now point out will constitute the most difficult and deciding feature of the war.

The recent rains have afforded Lord

Roberts good grass and copious supplies have reached him. News of his advance is eagerly awaited.

BOER BOSS GUNS

Mounted on High Copies in Roberts' Front.

LONDON, March 7.—A dispatch to the Daily News from Modder river, dated Monday, March 5, and describing the Boer position in front of Lord Roberts, says:

"The Boers seem to like to be so busy entrenching. They have mounted eight guns on high kopjes. It is marvelous how they drag these weapons into such positions."

It is reported here that at a recent emergency meeting of the Free State Read at Bloemfontein, a radical difference of opinion developed, the majority favoring peace at any price, but the minority, including President Steyn, advocating fight to the end."

JOUBERT

In Supreme Command at Osfontein.

LONDON, March 7.—A dispatch to the Standard from Osfontein, dated Sunday, March 4, says:

"General Joubert is reported to be in supreme command of the Boer forces here."

Dutch Uprising.

CAPE TOWN, March 6.—Nearly the whole of the Dutch population of the Prieska and Kenhardt districts are in rebellion. Many of the Dutch from neighboring districts are reported to have joined them, notably Piet Molman, who will lead the rebels to Brandvies. Lucas Steinkamp, commanding the Boers, is reported marching on Carnarvon. It is believed that Gordonia and Victoria West will rise. It is also thought that the total number of men in arms will exceed 2,000. The general opinion of loyalists that a strong force of British will be required, as a reverse, would spread the rebellion.

WHITTAKER

Charged With the Shooting of Goebel, on Trial at Frankfurt, and Bound Over to the Grand Jury Without Bail—Some Damaging Testimony.

FRANKFORT, Ky., March 6.—A crowd which packed the Franklin county circuit court room gathered to-day to hear the examining trial of Harlan Whittaker, the Butler county farm hand, suspected of being implicated in the murder of Goebel. Several prominent ladies were present. The charge was changed from malicious shooting to murder. Whittaker was nervous. Thirteen witnesses, all summoned by the commonwealth, were called. The first witnesses sworn were men who had been concerned in the arrest of Whittaker on the morning of the assassination. These witnesses were John A. Miles, A. Miller, Detective Armstrong, Constable Davis, Harrod, and Policeman Thompson. Armstrong and Harrod swore that Whittaker had contradicted himself in stating his whereabouts on the capitol square at the moment the fatal shots were fired.

At noon court adjourned until 3 p. m. The last witness called during the forenoon was Charles Howard, a farmer, who said Whittaker told him a week before the shooting that he had come to Frankfort to protect Governor Taylor's life. Howard declared that just after Goebel fell he saw one of the Philpots and two of the Howards, Berry and Jim, members of the well-known mountain families, in the door of the executive building, heavily armed. He said that he was deputed by the sheriff to guard the capitol grounds, but was ordered away by the commanding officer when the troops arrived. None of the witnesses for the defense were named during the morning. It was believed Whittaker's attorneys had a surprise in store for the other side. They declined to cross-examine any of the witnesses for the prosecution.

Wingate Thompson, a policeman who took Whittaker to the jail, said that on the way the prisoner cried out in his fear: "Don't let them mob me, and I'll tell all I know about it, but I didn't shoot him."

Whittaker was held without bail for the April grand jury. Silas Jones, the Whitley county suspect, who was released on bail, was put on the stand, but was asked only a few questions, both sides apparently not wanting to go into his evidence deeply.

The other witnesses who testified were John E. Files, E. T. Lillard, Jr., Wingate Thompson, Frank Dally, R. A. Armstrong, John Noonan, John Moran, David Davis, W. W. Combs, Albert Charlton, Dennis Rath and Charles Howard, sr.

New evidence was brought out by F. W. Bowman, of Hardin county, who testified that a half hour before the assassination he saw the window on the second floor over the main entrance to the executive building raised. He could see only the arm of the man who raised the window and saw two men standing farther back. He said that when Whittaker was arrested he recognized the clothes he had on then as those worn by the man who raised the window. He said one of the two men who was standing back from the window at the time mentioned, said to the other: "Damn it, we ought to have killed the other two."

This remark, he thinks, had reference to two judges of the court of appeals. The description of the two men who are alleged to have held this conversation tallied with suspects who have been under surveillance, but who have not been arrested. Silas Jones, the Whitley county suspect, testified that he was in the ante-room of the executive office when the assassination occurred, and from the sound he thought the shots were fired from the office of the secretary of state.

WHEELING GOVERNMENT BUILDING

Bill Passed the Senate, Appropriating \$400,000 for the New Structure.

WILL BE PUSHED IN HOUSE

By Mr. Dovenor, Who Feels Confident of an Early and Favorable Consideration.

Special Dispatch to the Intelligencer.

WASHINGTON, March 6.—Senator Scott secured to-day, under suspension of the rules, the passage of the bill introduced by him December 6, 1898, "to provide for the purchase of a site for the erection of a public building thereon in the city of Wheeling, W. Va."

The bill authorizes the secretary of the treasury to acquire by purchase or otherwise the site for the proposed structure, and to cause to be erected a suitable building, including fire-proof vaults, heating and ventilating apparatus, elevators and approaches for the use of the United States court, post-office and other government offices in Wheeling, at a cost not exceeding \$400,000.

It further provides a method of procedure for procuring the site, which shall be subject to the approval of the secretary of the treasury, and the location to be determined by him. The secretary of the treasury is given supervision of the plans, specifications and estimates for the building, which are to be prepared by the supervising architect of the treasury.

A further provision is made for the sale of the building and site of the present custom house in Wheeling, the proceeds of which sale are to be deposited in the United States treasury as miscellaneous receipts.

Representative Dovenor, as is known, has charge of a similar bill in the house. He said to-night he is confident of getting it through. He hopes to have it passed at the present session. The outlook for the new building is therefore very encouraging. It amounts to a certainty.

SENATOR SCOTT'S RESOLUTION

Turning Government of Philippines Over to the President Until Such Time as Congress Shall Act.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE INTELLIGENCER.

WASHINGTON, March 6.—Hon. N. B. Scott to-day introduced in the senate a joint resolution, authorizing the President of the United States to govern the Philippine islands until Congress should otherwise provide. The resolution is as follows:

"Be it resolved by the senate and house of representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled:

"That until otherwise provided by Congress the President of the United States shall exercise and employ all military, civil and judicial powers necessary in his discretion to govern the Philippine islands, and that all such power shall be vested in such persons and exercised and executed in such manner as the President shall determine from time to time to be fitting and proper for maintaining government thereof and therein, and for protecting the inhabitants of said islands in the full, fair and free enjoyment of their liberty, property and religion."

The senator gave notice that he would speak to the resolution at an early day, possibly Friday next.

SENATOR THURSTON

Will Start for Parkersburg To-Day. Representatives Dovenor and Dayton and Other Prominent Republicans Will Attend—Other Items of Interest.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE INTELLIGENCER.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 6.—Senator Thurston, of Nebraska, will leave here to-morrow in a special car for Parkersburg, where he goes to address the State League of Republican Clubs. The senator will be accompanied by Mrs. Thurston.

Representatives Dayton and Dovenor will also attend the club convention. They will be accompanied by General Van H. Buckley and Mrs. Buckley and several members of the West Virginia Republican Association of this city.

Messrs. George W. Lutz and W. W. Woods, of Wheeling, are in Washington. They will probably leave for home to-morrow.

Mr. Samuel Jacobs, of the Wheeling Herald, has been appointed to a position in the census office in Washington.

Representative Dovenor has secured from the postoffice department an order for the payment to G. W. Furber and his partner, of Benwood, the reward of \$200 offered for the arrest of the parties who robbed the Coon Island post-office in Pennsylvania.

The rivers and harbors committee of the house, of which Mr. Dovenor is a member, is giving daily hearings to persons interested in improvements. It is announced that all hearings upon future appropriation bills for the rivers and harbors must be had at the present session. The bill will be ready for presentation at the beginning of the next session.

Weather Forecast.

For Ohio—Fair Wednesday, except snow along the lake; colder in eastern portion; Thursday fair; brisk west to north winds. For Western Pennsylvania—Fair Wednesday, except snow near Lake Erie; colder; Thursday fair; brisk northwesterly winds. For West Virginia—Fair and colder Wednesday; Thursday fair; northerly winds.

Local Temperature.

The temperature yesterday as observed by C. Schnepf, druggist, corner of Market and Fourteenth streets, was as follows:

7 a. m. 52° 8 p. m. 62°
9 a. m. 58° 11 p. m. 60°
12 m. 60° Rain.